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LETTER DATED 16 JANUARY 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ETHIOPIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit a statement made by the current Chairman of the National Salvation Council of Somalia, Mr. Ali Mahdi Mohamed, at the conclusion of the Council's third session, held at Addis Ababa from 2 to 11 January 1998.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Duri MOHAMMED
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Statement made by the current Chairman of the National Salvation Council of Somalia, Mr. Ali Mahdi Mohamed, on 12 January 1998, at the conclusion of the Council's third session, held at Addis Ababa

The National Salvation Council of Somalia held its third session at Addis Ababa from 2 to 11 January 1998.

The Council's third session took place at a time when the peace process in Somalia is gathering new momentum, and greater prospects of national concord are clearly surfacing at the horizon.

The meeting offered all the delegates a propitious opportunity to discuss the key issues related to the reconciliation process in Somalia, and noted with satisfaction the growing trend of peace being manifested by all segments of the Somalia society at this juncture.

The meeting examined the lifespan of the National Salvation Council and its performance during the period of its existence, stressing the importance of the continuity of its role in promoting peace and reconciliation in Somalia while reaffirming once again its unrelenting determination to pursue the objectives of attaining lasting peace and stability in the country.

The meeting decided in that connection to prolong the mandate of the National Salvation Council until a transitional government of national unity is established.

It also unanimously decided to uphold and strengthen the unity and cohesion of the National Salvation Council as a national platform for promoting peace and reconciliation throughout Somalia and working for the restoration of the dignity of the Somali people.

The meeting evaluated the role of the member States of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and expressed full appreciation for the tireless efforts they have made to promote peace and reconciliation in Somalia.

The meeting noted with immense satisfaction and gratitude the leading role that Ethiopia has taken in this respect in the fulfilment of the Organization of African Unity mandate as well as that of IGAD.

The meeting highly values the continuous support that Ethiopia has extended to the National Salvation Council in its search for national reconciliation and the establishment of a government of national unity in the interest of lasting peace and stability in Somalia.

The meeting attached importance to the continuity of the role of the IGAD member countries and considered it a cornerstone for the restoration of peace in

Somalia and the advancement of the reconciliation process initiated at Sodere, Ethiopia, in early 1997.

The meeting emphasized the fact that the Sodere peace process was a turning point for uniting all efforts and bringing the reconciliation process to the mainstream of national politics in Somalia.

The meeting agreed that, without Ethiopia's selfless initiative and contribution, it would have been very difficult for all to attain the many successes achieved in this regard. Therefore the National Salvation Council applauds the genuine, sustained and sincere efforts that Ethiopia has made in the course of peace and the devotion it has demonstrated uninterruptedly for so long.

The meeting underlined the importance of the Cairo inter-Somali talks which, with the Somali National Alliance faction, produced the Cairo Declaration, enabling the reconciliation process to proceed on a common course, thus generating new hopes in Somalia of achieving everlasting peace and mutual respect.

The meeting expressed its readiness to honour the provisions of the Cairo Declaration on Somalia, subject to the approval and acceptance of Hussein Aideed's group of the changes and amendments to the Cairo Declaration made by the National Salvation Council of Somalia at its third session, in Addis Ababa.

The third session of the National Salvation Council of Somalia addresses a strong brotherly appeal to its brother Mohamed Haji Ibrahim Igal to share in the furthering and enhancement of the ongoing peace process and the achievement of an all-inclusive and solid reconciliation in Somalia.

The meeting expressed its deep gratitude to the Government of Egypt for the strenuous efforts it has employed in bringing together all sides to the negotiating table so that the reconciliation process in Somalia could receive new impetus in accelerating the course of peace and reconciliation.

The meeting expressed its appreciation for the role that Egypt has played in making the Cairo Somali meeting take place with a view to enhancing and furthering the peace process in Somalia.

It is undeniable that the Egyptian efforts have complemented the previous efforts of IGAD for a joint and combined endeavour on the part of all peace partners of Somalia in the best interests of the region as a whole, and Somalia in particular.

The meeting recognized that all previous efforts embodied in the Nairobi Understanding, the San'aa Declaration and the Cairo Agreement were all important interim steps paving the way for a comprehensive reconciliation in Somalia, laying down the foundation for mutual trust and confidence-building among the Somali political factions.

Hence, the meeting expressed its gratitude to the Governments of Kenya, Yemen and Egypt for the input they have contributed to achieving lasting peace and reconciliation in Somalia.

The meeting urged all States to support the efforts of all parties in Somalia to attain peace and work to salvage the people of Somalia from chaos and continued armed conflicts.

The meeting called upon the Somali people to remain united behind the peace process, putting aside all their differences and working for the revival of state institutions.

The meeting expressed its gratitude to all members of the international community, especially to those friendly countries such as the United States of America, Italy and other European Union countries, which have contributed to the promotion of peace and reconciliation in Somalia.

The meeting expressed similar gratitude and appreciation to the international and regional organizations that have extended political encouragement and support to the restoration of peace in Somalia.

The meeting expressed special thanks to those countries and organizations that have extended humanitarian aid and relief to the Somali people during all these years of crisis, particularly to overcome the recent hardships they have been exposed to as a result of the river floods and heavy rainfalls.

The meeting noted with great satisfaction that the debates and discussions during the third session of the National Salvation Council were characterized by constructive exchanges of views, open and responsible dialogue and a sense of unity of purpose and common commitment.

The meeting pledges that the National Salvation Council will continue and redouble its efforts to achieve lasting peace in Somalia and reaffirms its commitment to the principles of a peaceful democratic evolution whereby fundamental human rights will be upheld and fully respected.